

Excerpts from Scripps-Howard Story on Dr. Michael Shimkin's speech:

Shimkin said a "new kind of prohibition -- on cigarettes -- would save at least 20 thousand lives a year in the United States."

He admitted such a ban would be difficult to invoke because "Tobacco is considered neither a food nor a drug and appears to be immune from all regulations except taxation...."

(The government) "can do more to protect the population from chemically-contaminated cranberries -- whose dangers for man are at most theoretical -- than from the hazards of tobacco...."

Shimkin (in Troan's words) challenged repeatedly assertions by Dr. Joseph Berkson, Mayo Clinic's chief statistician, that nobody has proved cigarette smoking can give people lung cancer.

Other Shimkin statements:

An "association" between smoking and lung cancer has been shown by "many statistical investigations."

At least 10 chemicals which can cause cancer in animals have been identified in tobacco smoke through "extensive laboratory experiments."

"Careful observations" of human tissue have shown tobacco produces changes in the lining of the breathing tubes similar to the kind which lead to cancer.

Shimkin concluded:

"It all adds up to this -- if tobacco smoking, at least in the form of cigarettes, were terminated, the annual mortality from lung cancer could be reduced by more than 60 percent, a saving of at least 20 thousand lives in the U.S. alone."

"Doctors," he said, "must realize this business of smoking is a serious public health problem and not a stale joke."

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Mr. Ragland's comment on the Shimkin speech, as given to Scripps-Howard, was as follows:

"This pronouncement brings into the open the prohibitionist aims of a small, self-appointed anti-tobacco group.

"Despite his extreme stand, it should be noted that Dr. Shimkin admits other scientists of prominence do not agree with his charges against tobacco.

"Nevertheless, Dr. Shimkin is now trying to dictate to laymen and doctors what their attitude should be toward tobacco use.

"He has made similar charges before, even though other scientists in the National Cancer Institute disagree with him. He ignores the sizeable and growing research evidence that does not support his position.

"It is ironic that this anti-tobacco spokesman calls for the scientific world to remain 'fluid' in its concepts of the complex diseases known as cancer, while being anything but 'fluid' in his own outlook toward the lung cancer question.

"He is one of a small group of tobacco critics who cite different figures at different times, ignoring the fact that their statistical claims are constantly shifting and often conflicting. They can't all be right but could all be wrong."

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